

Route 195 Public Open House Meeting Overview

Town Council Chambers

21 Tolland Green, Tolland, CT

December 2, 2008; 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Public Attendees - Residents

Winifred Hovomer

Roberta Gavin

Pat Croppōn

Gene Curylo

Peggy Bojajian

Steve Beeching

Lyn McLeod

Judy Gotter

Carolyn Buch

Christine Grey

Karen Kramer

Chris Cook

Linda Calabrese

Russ Howe

Todd Penney

Richard Tapp

John Littell

Jodie Marziano

Dave Joyce

Laura Bretas

Rich Fournier

Wendy Johnson

Michael McGee

Karen McGee

Tom Frattaroli

Judy Shaffer

Kevin Juber

Bruce Croppōn

Pat Curylo

Paul Bojajian

Charlie Saytanids

George Mantak

Arthur Gotter

Mike Evans

Len Buch

Bill McDermott

Constance Marsh

Tom Calabrese

Midge Hurtuk

Doris Poster

Jack Scavone

Sam Belsito

Mark Marziano

Brett Stoeffler

Jeff Kelly

Benjamin Stanford

Marilyn Lentocho

Steve Amedy

Deen O'Connell

Tony Wasiliphey

John Gould

Public Attendees – Business Owner/Other

Stephen Williams – Resident/Business Owner

Brian Kennedy – Other

Bob Stewart – Resident/Business Owner

Wally Rob - Other

Rod Hurtuk – Resident/Other

Committee Members

Kevin Bouley - Chairman

Kathy Bach - Former Town Council Member

Barbara Cook - Historic District Commission

Stephen Beeching - Resident & Business Owner

Steve Werbner - Tolland Town Manager

Fred Daniels - Town Council

Harvey Gilbert - Town Council

Marilee Beebe-Kostrun - Planning Commission Alternate

Others

Linda Farmer - Tolland Town Planner

Jeffery Hunter – ConnDOT

Lia Huang - CRCOG

David Smith - Tolland DPW / Town Engineer

Jim Morrin – ConnDOT

Project Team

Tom Maziarz – CRCOG

Steve O'Neill – VHB

Emily Moos - CRCOG

Ryan Malloy - VHB

Meeting Purpose: Second Public Open House to present Route 195 draft alternative concept plan for RT 195 in the vicinity of the Tolland Green.

Welcome & Introductions: Tom Maziarz welcomed the public and introduced the Project Team members. Mr. Maziarz then gave a brief overview of the Route 195 Corridor Study.

Draft Alternative Concept Presentation: Tom Maziarz reviewed the goals for the Village Center District and the issues at each intersection. Mr. Maziarz continued the presentation with the proposed alternatives and options for the Village Center District.

Next Steps: Tom Maziarz explained the next steps of the project which are for the Advisory Committee/Project Team to consider the comments made at the public meeting, adjust concepts as appropriate, then endorse a set of final recommendations. At that time the recommendations will be forwarded to the Town Council for endorsement.

Public Comments: The following summarizes comments heard during the meeting. These comments are grouped by intersection.

North Green (Route 74 at Old Stafford Road)

- One resident did not like the roundabout option because it took away too much of the Town Green. The resident preferred the T-intersection with post traffic lights (opposed to overhead traffic lights). Tom Maziarz stated that ConnDOT does not allow side mounted traffic lights.
- Another resident agreed that the T-intersection is preferred; the roundabout does not fit the character of the Town Green.
- A third resident stated that she preferred the T-intersection because the roundabout would require tree removal. This resident also did not like hanging traffic lights.
- A resident felt that the roundabout would result in less controlled vehicle movement facing the Green area; this puts any Green users in danger. Tom Maziarz replied that roundabout movements are very slow.
- One resident preferred the roundabout option because it removes the opportunity for vehicles to travel 65 mph.
- Another resident expressed preference for the roundabout for safety reasons since it would slow vehicles down. He felt that safety was more important than preserving the size of the Green.
- One resident proposed a 3-way stop at this intersection. Tom Maziarz explained that this option was reviewed; the intersection level of service (LOS) decreases dramatically. Additionally, it is highly unlikely that ConnDOT will approve a 3-way stop sign at this intersection, but the proposed signalized T-intersection does not prevent this setup in the future.
- A resident commented that she would like the Town Green to remain as it is currently, but understands that this is not realistic. The resident regularly uses the North Green intersection and feels that change is necessary. She is opposed to the roundabout and questioned whether trucks would be able to maneuver through safely. The resident strongly prefers the T-intersection to the roundabout.
- Another resident cited personal experience with a roundabout in New Hampshire. He felt that drivers are confused by roundabouts and do not know how to use them correctly.
- One resident expressed concern over bike safety in a roundabout.
- A resident asked whether the T-intersection could be implemented without a traffic light. Tom Maziarz explained that if the stop sign was kept at Old Stafford Road and if Route 74 was relatively straight, traffic conditions may improve but the speeding issue would not be addressed. The project team will review this configuration.
- Another resident questioned the island shown on Old Stafford Road in the proposed T-intersection configuration. Mr. Maziarz explained that the island prevented opposing traffic from facing each other.
- A resident noted that on the Route 74 approach to the Town Green (near the hardware store) there is a dip in the road that makes it difficult for vehicles in the Town Green to see the vehicles in this section of the road. Tom Maziarz added that the approaching vehicles on Route 74 cannot see the vehicles in the Town Green area until they are on the crest of this road.
- One resident asked if the 20' lane in the roundabout was necessary. Mr. Maziarz answered that this width was necessary to accommodate large vehicles like school buses.

- A resident expressed dislike for roundabouts and asked if there were any local roundabouts to try out. Another resident mentioned a roundabout in Mansfield and a third resident mentioned Evergreen Walk. Tom Maziarz noted that the roundabout in the presentation is in Windsor and that Ellington has a proposed roundabout at 5 Corners. He noted that the Evergreen Walk roundabouts cater to a different type of traffic. Mr. Maziarz continued that roundabouts generally don't fare well in public meetings, but after trying one out the public becomes more accepting of them. He added that two lane roundabouts are a little more confusing.
- A resident asked if any data was available on accident rates in roundabouts. Tom Maziarz stated that the number of accidents is likely similar to that of T-intersections, but the severity of the collisions are much less due to the lower speeds.
- Another resident commented that roundabouts seem to work well in Seattle, forcing vehicles to slow down. Tom Maziarz added that there aren't too many roundabout examples in New England, but Europe does have several.

Center Green (Route 74 at Route 195)

- A resident was interested in the possibility of a roundabout in the center of the Green. Tom Maziarz explained that this configuration was reviewed. The traffic performance was good, but it did take a lot of land away from the Green. Additionally, pedestrian accessibility was much better with the T-intersection.
- One resident was concerned about vehicles queued at the stop sign in the Green. He felt that this queue may block the carriage road. Tom Maziarz stated that this should not be an issue in the AM peak hours; however the PM peak hours have an LOS D rating.
- A resident questioned the lack of a designated left turn lane for vehicles continuing onto Route 74. Tom Maziarz stated that a designated left turn lane would further reduce the Town Green area and it was not necessary.
- Another resident asked about the number of vehicles entering/exiting the church. The resident suggested reversing the direction of the driveway. Tom Maziarz mentioned that the design is not yet in the detailed phase, but that this will be reviewed.

General Comments

- A resident felt that the use of the carriage roads should be discouraged
- Another resident questioned whether the carriage roads would be one way or bidirectional.
- One resident mentioned that bypass usage of the carriage roads likely will not be an issue because the LOS at the Green intersections have been improved. Tom Maziarz added that the bump outs and raised crosswalks with texture will slow vehicles down on the carriage roads.
- A resident questioned if snow plows will have any difficulty with the raised crosswalks. Tom Maziarz stated that snow plows should not have any issue; the raised crosswalks have a ~4" elevation difference.
- A resident expressed concern over speed in the Town Green area. Mr. Maziarz explained that the approach taken and traffic calming techniques applied in these proposed alternatives will help prevent vehicles from speeding in this zone.
- A resident asked if the proposed alternatives were meant to encourage the use of Old Post Road. Tom Maziarz stated that the proposed alternatives were not meant to do so.
- One resident questioned whether the traffic models were interconnected or independent. Steve O'Neill explained that the traffic models were interconnected. Another resident added that all proposed alternatives would need to be implemented to achieve the maximum benefit.
- A resident asked if wide load trucks would still be allowed on these roads. Tom Maziarz replied that oversize loads will still be allowed to use Route 74; these trucks have been accommodated in the proposed alternatives.
- A resident asked if street parking would still be available. Tom Maziarz explained that street parking would be available and that parked vehicles on the street will also help with traffic calming.
- One resident asked what the posted speed limit will be in this area. Tom Maziarz replied that the speed limit hasn't yet been determined. Another resident added that more speed enforcement is necessary. Mr. Maziarz explained that there aren't enough police hours available to be effective.

- A resident commented that the visual approach cues are right on target, but was uncertain about the cost for the proposed ornamental lighting. If possible, these lights should be solar powered.
- A resident asked about implementation funding. Tom Maziarz explained that the project is currently in the study phase and funding for implementation will still need to be acquired. However, this type of study brings the project one step closer to being ready when funding does become available.
- One resident asked if there is a preferred design for emergency response. Tom Maziarz stated that overall LOS improvement will also benefit emergency vehicle response. Generally, emergency response teams do not like raised crosswalks, but these features will be designed to accommodate emergency vehicles.
- Another resident expressed opposition to any new traffic lights. The resident agreed with the approach changes, but wanted to maintain the integrity of the Town Green. Tom Maziarz explained that the proposed alternatives will not likely be implemented all at once. A phased approach will likely occur as needed. Another resident noted that changing one intersection will impact others; if all of the options are not implemented at the same time a review of single intersection modification simulations will need to take place prior to implementation.
- A resident asked about experience with rumble strips on approaches. Tom Maziarz stated that these have been tested in West Hartford, but were removed due to noise complaints. He continued that the rumble strips are effective at slowing vehicles, but sometimes drivers intentionally try to make as much noise as possible. The resident added that rumble strips could be placed perpendicular rather than parallel to the road. Tom Maziarz noted that a perpendicular application would be similar to textured crosswalks; the speed reduction is not as dramatic, but may help reduce speeds.
- A resident felt that pedestrian indicator signs should be installed in the Town Green area. Tom Maziarz stated that the plan will likely include these signs since they are relatively effective.

Tom Maziarz wrapped up the meeting by thanking the public for attending and contributing feedback.

The meeting concluded at 8:50 PM however some members of the public continued to meet and talk with Advisory Committee and Project Team members.